

**4VAC15-40-240**  
**Game: In General: Animal population control.**

**Summary:**

The proposal is to allow the Director to issue special permits to take game and fur-bearing animals for the purpose of population reduction in situations where existing statutory and regulatory options for population reduction are not applicable.

**Proposed language of amendment:**

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Whenever biological evidence suggests that populations of game animals or fur-bearing animals may exceed or threaten to exceed the carrying capacity of a specified range, or whenever population reduction of a species is necessary to manage for another wildlife species, or whenever the health or general condition of a species indicates the need for population reduction, or whenever the threat of human public health and safety or significant economic loss indicates the need for population reduction, the director is authorized to issue special permits to obtain the desired reduction by licensed hunters or licensed trappers on areas prescribed by department wildlife biologists. Further, in situations where existing statutory and regulatory options for population reduction are not applicable, the director is authorized to issue special permits to obtain the desired population reduction by individuals named within the director's authorization document. Designated game species or fur-bearing species may be taken in excess of the general bag limits, during closed seasons, with all legal methods outlined in the Code of Virginia or board regulation, and with any type of lawful weapon, as defined in § 29.1-519 of the Code of Virginia and in board regulation, on special permits issued under this section under such conditions as may be prescribed by the director.

**Rationale:**

Over the past decade, Department staffs have encountered instances of property owners experiencing conflicts with overabundant game and furbearer populations, but where existing legal mechanisms to address the situation were not applicable. This proposal would amend the animal population control regulation to allow special permits to be issued to address these very unique management situations. As envisioned, this amendment would not result in the creation of a formal program but would be handled on a case by case basis as these limited situation arose.